

F274

.A37

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00019305892



MASSACHUSETTS  
AND  
SOUTH CAROLINA.  
CORRESPONDENCE  
BETWEEN  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS  
AND  
WADE HAMPTON AND OTHERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

OFFICE STATE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, }  
Sept. 22, 1868. }

TO THE HON. JOHN Q. ADAMS, BOSTON, MASS. :

DEAR SIR:—We have the honor to make an appeal to you in behalf of our common country. We earnestly beg that you will consent to visit us at Columbia, and deliver an address to our people. We assure you that within three days we could have an assemblage of 10,000 people present to hear the words of peace addressed by Boston to Columbia. What stronger reply could there be to the misrepresentations of the Radicals, than to hear "John Quincy Adams" talk of Union and fraternal relations on the soil of South Carolina?

Would it not be as if the past were speaking to the present? Would it not seem as if the grave had given up her dead, and they were holding counsel of the future?

It seems to us that your visit here, received as it would be by our people, would send an electric thrill from one end of the country to the other. We ask no holiday performance for political or party effect. We invite you to a consultation upon

living principles of our free institutions. With us it is no longer a question of party, but a question of social life.

When the South was beaten in the field, it became her high resolve to restore and strengthen the Union. Must not every sane man see that this was her only policy? That the Union is now of the very last importance to the South? More important than to any part of the country.

Must not every sane man also see that in the very nature of things slavery is dead forever? Has not every Southern State put her name and seal to the deed? But beyond this, did not every Southern statesman see that with the result of the war slavery could not stand? That it must cease to be a domestic institution, because it had become an international (so to speak) cause of war.

Are there no statesmen left among those in power who can see this? Or do they see it and are they basely using the hopes, the peace, the very life of the country to advance personal or party interests?

Let us hope that God in his wisdom may turn the hearts of those who know the right, yet pursue the wrong, and strike the scales from the eyes of others, who are really in the darkness of ignorance, and therefore easily the dupes of their better informed leaders.

Pray answer us immediately, and appoint an early day for your visit here. We shall require but short notice to make the necessary arrangements to welcome you in a becoming manner.

The policy of the South is peace — it is her only hope. You will see this with your eyes, and hear it with your ears, should you accept our invitation. If you would telegraph to us your acceptance, we could be ready to meet you by the 5th of October. Wednesday, the 7th, would probably be a better day.

Very respectfully, your fellow citizens,

WADE HAMPTON, JNO. P. THOMAS,  
JAS. DAN'L POPE, W. B. STANLEY,  
F. W. McMASTER,

*State Central Executive Committee, Columbia, S. C.*

## MR. ADAMS' REPLY.

QUINCY, Sept. 28, 1868.

MESSRS. WADE HAMPTON, JAS. DAN'L POPE, F. W. Mc  
MASTER, JNO. P. THOMAS and W. B. STANLEY.

GENTLEMEN: Your letter of Sept. 22d reached me on the 26th, and I found it to require such careful consideration that I have withheld my answer until now. My first impulse was to accept your invitation at once, and hasten to respond to your appeal upon the instant; but a moment's reflection, and a review of your letter, restrained me. I am as anxious as you can be to see kindly relations and fraternal feelings replace the sore and angry suspicion which prevails upon both sides of our land, nor would any labor daunt me in such a cause; but I am more powerless than you are to promote such a result. You greatly exaggerate any influence of mine, misled, doubtless, by the accident of an historic name. I represent nothing in Massachusetts, but a comparatively small and very unpopular minority, and am regarded as hardly less objectionable, though far more insignificant than yourselves by the majority. Nothing that I could do or say, if I visited you would be likely to receive a fair or candid construction. My action would be attributed to partisan or unworthy motives, and yours to the inveterate animosity which is still believed to animate the South.

In spite of any protests of ours it will be insisted that we had some "disloyal" intent in our meeting. I do not urge these apprehensions as reasons for an absolute refusal, for I should try to face my share of the obloquy with such fortitude as I could muster, if I saw a fair chance of aiding, be it never so little, a better understanding between the sections.

But as you seem to anticipate an important effect on the North from the reception which you might offer to me, I think it right to disabuse you of the error. Nor do I think that I can say those things to your people which would be delightful to them to hear, or pleasant for me to speak. Your fate has

been, for the present, involved by the inexorable logic of events in a most bitter political struggle. The interest, and I doubt not the convictions, of the dominant party will prevent any dispassionate consideration of your case until after the election.

It is declared, and I fear it is widely believed, that the spirit of secession still fires the Southern heart, and works through the Democratic party. A mass of honest men are taught and believe that the success of that party means the political re-establishment of the genius of revolt, and the elevation to power of the Southern leaders in the late war. Now, while I do not believe that if the wide-spread suspicion of this intent could be discharged from the minds of our people here, there would be a great difficulty in obtaining a fair hearing, it is too potent a weapon of party warfare to be relinquished during this contest or the Presidency. If the Democratic party is defeated in this canvass it will be because the people fear its success would jeopardize the substantial results of the war. Now, upon this point the Northern mind is absolutely determined and no party could maintain itself which should repudiate the war or surrender its acquisitions. For my own part I think it would be very difficult to get rid of any of the logical and legitimate results of the war if we tried to ever so hard, but still our people are very sensitive on that point.

I cannot see for instance, of what value your pet dogma of the constitutional right to secede would be to you, even if we granted you a dispensation to proclaim it on the house-tops. Constitutional or not, it will never again be practicable, except in the form of revolution, and that is an extra constitutional right which can not be taken away from any people. Slavery I take to be stone dead, for the reasons you very clearly and ably state in your letter me. It would never again be of any value to you if you had it back, and the ghost of it, which is so much dreaded at the North, the phantom of involuntary servitude for poverty and color, as a punishment for vagrancy which haunts so many well-meaning men among us, would speedily become

a burden so odious and so intolerably expensive that if for no better reason, you would be glad to drop it. But at the same time you must yourselves be well aware that the hasty and inconsiderate legislation upon this subject in two or three of your "States lately in rebellion" did more to fasten universal suffrage upon you than any other one thing. The North is well aware that there is a wide distinction between civil rights and political privileges, nor were our wisest and more practical statesmen of the Republican party at first inclined to adopt the dangerous experiment of placing political power in the hands of your poor, ignorant field hands upon a mere fanciful theory of the natural equality of man. Doubtless a citizen of Massachusetts who is utterly illiterate may be my superior in all manly qualities, but unless he can read the Constitution in the English language he is not my equal politically.

The principle is here admitted that we may and must temper theoretical equality with practical tests of fitness for public duty. Now this was ignored in your case, because it was urged and believed that thus alone could the blacks protect themselves, and it was said that any admitted qualification would be abused by you to their total exclusion from the franchise and consequent helplessness. The Northern people, having freed the slaves and left them still mingled with their former masters, could not, with decency or humanity, abandon them naked to the savage enmity which they were taught to believe you felt to them, nor could they calmly look on to see those oppressed of whose comfort and happiness they had become the guardians. The Northern States pardoned the palpable usurpation of a power never granted to Congress, upon the plea of necessity. Universal suffrage was no necessary corollary of the war; it was extorted by distrust, offspring of the long slavery agitation. That gave enormous power to the class of politicians who preach the perfect and complete wickedness of the Southern white. These same men urge, and they persuade many, that you still cherish a devotion to the "Lost Cause," which does not content

itself with the hopeless tenderness which we feel for the dead, but is ready to take arms again at the least encouragement. These fears mingle largely in the canvass, and will exert a strong influence in the result. I think that distrust and fear have dictated your terms, more than malice or revenge. It was not cheerfully that the North sacrificed the Constitution for which it fought so long. For my own part, I have never felt any apprehension of losing any of the proper results of the war. I have always believed that you must from necessity yield them as frankly as we claimed them. I have never doubted that it was possible to treat you, after your surrender, in such a way as to enlist your aid and engage your sympathies in a constitutional restoration of the Union, and yet secure freedom and fairness to the black, and tranquillity and happiness to the whites. As you very forcibly say, there is no policy possible for you but peace. War now would be your utter destruction.

The Union is of more value to you than to us, and to the Constitution alone can you fly for protection. A general and cordial confidence in your attitude, feelings and protests is essential to your peace and prosperity. We must renew the old spirit within us, or the new Union will be an empty form. Even if by a party success in a very close vote at the North, aided by your own efforts at the South, you obtain a temporary relief from your abject state to-day, your condition will still be precarious, your path full of snares, and a true Union as distant as ever. So long as one-half the North is persuaded that you have the will and the power to jockey them out of what cost them so dear, we attempt to rebuild our Union on the sands. Time alone and a patient and enduring persistence on your part in well-doing, in the face of all discouragement, can effectually remove the cause of your ills; a palliative will but induce a reaction again. A cheerful concurrence in the essential principles of democratic and constitutional government I regard as requisite for your peaceful progress in the future. Inclining to these opinions, I should have excused myself from



accepting your kind invitation had you not expressly disclaimed any political intent.

I do not wish to make any political speeches to your people in the interest of any party, nor add new bitterness to your already dangerous position. But as I have felt the evil very much of late, that of our own knowledge we were so little informed of the real needs, and wishes, and purposes of each other; as I cannot feel sure that I may not be of some use, and as I deplore with all my heart the distracted and dissevered condition of our once united people, I will meet you as you request, as fellow-citizens should meet, in times of difficulty, to consult with you upon our duty at this time. I shall try to speak frankly rather than agreeably, and I shall hope for equal sincerity in return. I need not assure you that what I have written has been dictated by the kindest feeling. I am not insensible to your trials and sufferings; the loss of friends, prosperity and power, and exclusion from all part or lot in voting away your last pittance is bitter indeed. But, hollow as the ordinary platitudes sound in the sufferer's ear, may it not be in the good providence of God to prove to the uttermost the quality of your people and lead them through these dark ways to a higher and noble career beyond.

I at least am determined to hope so, and I doubt not may live to see the day when we shall all be once more a happy and united people, dwelling in peace under the protection of the Constitution and within the gentle clasp of our old Union. Then, indeed, South Carolina and Massachusetts may cordially embrace, and the fortunate spokesman of my State, that day, will represent the whole instead of a fraction of her people.

I shall leave home on Monday next and proceed without delay to Columbia.

I am, gentlemen,

Your friend and servant,

JOHN Q. ADAMS.

## SPEECH OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

AT COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA,

OCTOBER 12, 1868.

---

## MY FELLOW CITIZENS OF SOUTH CAROLINA :

I have come to speak to you here to-day, from my distant home in Massachusetts, at the earnest request of your State Central Executive Committee, to consult with you upon the "living principles of our free institutions," in the hope that our meeting may in some degree, however small, tend to promote a better understanding, a kinder feeling, and ultimate harmony between the mass of white people here, and a very large portion of the people of the North, and especially of my own State ; and I am here also to learn from your own lips your wishes and intentions upon questions of public policy which most nearly affect you.

You have also been told that I am a grandson of one of the earliest opponents of your peculiar institution, and I will tell you myself that I was an ardent, though humble supporter of Mr. Lincoln ; a hearty friend of his administration ; always in favor of an energetic prosecution of the war while it lasted, and that I hailed with gratitude the abolition of slavery. I had long regarded it as a dangerous element in our Federal polity, and certain at some time or other to jeopardize the existence of the Union and the authority of the Constitution. Sooner or later the conflict between the two systems of labor, the free labor of the North, and the slave labor of the South, was sure to come. It did come, and has passed away, with terrible suffering, and now the South lies bleeding and faint, and almost despairing, looks vainly for the sign of promise in her dark horizon. You ask each other in vain what shall we do ? Where can we go ? Whence cometh our salvation ?

I will tell you, my friends, frankly at the outset, that I believe that your redemption must be your own act, that your fate is in your own hands at last. I do not mean to deny that your condition from time to time may be influenced by the fluctuations of the heady political fight at the North, but I suspect that your permanent welfare will mainly depend on the power you may develop now to grasp firmly, and embrace sincerely the fundamental principle of our Government, as settled by the war — a constitutional Democracy. That principle seems to me a recognition of the equal rights of all men under the law, or to stretch it as broadly as possible, the right of every man to think, speak, and act as he wishes, provided he does not, by so doing, infringe the equal right of his neighbor. I do not regard political privileges as rights in this sense at all. The general welfare of the community must regulate their distribution.

This is all very well, you may say, but it offers no present and practical solution of our difficulty. It is very much like telling a man who is suffering from intemperance, that his only permanent cure must come from his adherence to the laws of health. And I agree with you in that view. We are now suffering terribly, both North and South, from political intemperance. You were guilty of it, when you did all in your power to rupture the Union by force, because you would not trust the question of slavery to the people under the Constitution. We are guilty of it now, when we will not restore the Union under the Constitution; because we mistrust the people. What is needed in the first place, is moderation and calmness, and a habit of patience in politics. We are inclined to be impulsive and headlong in our devices. Waiting and watching, relying on slow but sure processes, has never been very popular with any people of our race, and is peculiarly distasteful to us; but, my fellow-citizens, this disagreeable discipline is, in my judgment, precisely the training we all of us are in need of, and I think it essential to your happy deliverance. Let us come down to the actual facts of your case, and try to look at

them calmly, dispassionately, and without prejudice. It is always foolish to deceive ourselves, and in your case, to mislead you knowingly, would be a crime. I shall therefore speak with frankness and plainness.

You began the war down here at Sumter, under a claim of right to defend yourselves as an independent State which had exercised a reserved right to secede from the Union, and I take it that no one denies that the cause of that action was the apprehended danger to slavery from the result of the election of 1860. You fought for your side of the controversy for four years, with a desperate determination and courage, until at last you were compelled by the fate of battle to surrender. You had allied yourselves with other seceded States, and formed a confederacy which claimed an equal rank among the nations. You proclaimed slavery its corner-stone. In the stress of conflict, as a war measure, justified by the emergency, and as a means of distressing you, your slaves were proclaimed free. The North, on the other hand, insisted that no State could secede under the Constitution, and that the whole proceeding on the part of the South was an insurrection of a portion of the people of the seceding States. It is far from my intention to revive old controversies or reopen settled disputes, but I must state the facts to bring us to our present position. You claimed to be a sovereign State, and on your own showing were by the laws of war subject to any terms the victor might impose. It did not lie in your mouths, therefore, to demand any rights in the Union you had broken, or any remedy from the consequences of your own acts under the Constitution you had renounced. If *we* were to accept your own theory of action you were alien enemies, and your land conquered territory, and so subject to the naked laws of war alone. But the North had always denied every one of your positions, and had insisted that you were never out of the Union; that your resolutions of secession were simply void; that you could not cease to be citizens of the United States by any such process, and that, of course, you were liable, when

taken, to the pains and penalties of treason. To be sure, this theory was necessarily infringed a little in practice, as in respect to exchange of prisoners, and the observance of the same laws of warfare that obtain between independent States. But this was the accepted faith. The war was to subdue insurrection, not to conquer a nation; you were defeated rebels, not vanquished alien enemies; and the Union was re-established, not extended, over your territory.

It was upon this theory that the Government of the United States proceeded at first to renew what were called the practical relations of the States to the Union, and you gladly accepted this view of the case, and did all in your power to resume your vacant place. Now it has always seemed to me that you, by your acts at that time, gave all the proof in your power that you abandoned the principle for which you fought, accepted the decision of your wager of battle, and bowed to the supremacy of the Constitution. You were offered, and you ratified, an amendment to that instrument absolutely and forever abolishing slavery. You manifested, so far as I have ever been able to see, a disposition to take us on our own terms and renounce all you had fought for; pay in full the stake for which you had played and lost. To be sure, you had no choice, and you could not then have complained had you been treated for what you claimed to be — alien enemies — but you might have been sullen and refused to do anything. You did the best you could do, as I have always thought, and I think the North would have done the very best thing she could have done to have taken you back in the fine temper in which General Grant reported he found you at that time. I do not know. You people here may be different from any people I have ever seen or known, or read of, but I think it would have been best to have then taken you cordially by the hand, told you that we believed your promises, accepted your word of honor, and that by-gones should be by-gones. Besides, I think we were in good faith bound, after you had acceded to our own terms and acted upon them, when

offered by an authority which you believed, and I still believe, was adequate to act bindingly in the premises, to complete the transaction. Much as you were interested in so doing, I think the North was even more so; I think it would have restored the Union with the least shock to its frame-work and with the least possible strain to the Constitution.

Congress, however, interfered, tore asunder once more the knitting fracture, because they averred the cure would never be fair and sound by that process, and adopted another. Their first attempt was the 14th amendment, which they offered you as a dose preparatory to adjustment. But it was not stated to be final, and there is much controversy at the North as to your reasons for rejecting it. If it was the suffrage clause which decided your action, I think, looking at it from your position, you were wrong. If you could not swallow the clause requiring you disqualify your leaders, my heart tells me you were right. I hope I shall never lisp one word of reproach against any man who refused to go back from his chosen foremost men at such a time! But, at any rate, its submission to you at all showed that thus far Congress stuck to the Northern theory of the contest. But next came an entire change of base, and Congress abandoned the Northern view of matters entirely, and thus late in the day came over to the camp you had been beaten out of, as the more tenable position of the two. They took up your old ground, and insisted that you were, after all, alien enemies; your country conquered territory; yourselves prisoners of war, and your rights of every kind forfeited. This is at bottom the meaning of the reconstruction acts under which you now live. They are based on conquest and the right of the victor in international warfare. I do not think that this was, upon a comprehensive view of the general and permanent welfare of the whole people, a generous, a wise, or a constitutional course to take, but it has been taken, and now we come to the difficulties of the position.

As things in fact stand, what is best for us to do? How

can we best modify or remedy existing evils? The case would be puzzling enough at best, but the addition of the element of universal negro suffrage, perplexes it tenfold. Then it is complicated by a multitude of conflicting theories, prejudices, and passions, here, as well as at the North, and the circumstances of peculiar political excitement attending a Presidential election in which this very question of your proper status is the vital issue, render it well nigh impossible to arrive at satisfactory results. The best consideration, however, which I have been able to give the subject, has brought me to some conclusions, which I offer with great diffidence, but in entire good faith. I propose to try to escape from our difficulties, by reversing the process that brought us into them. When you appealed to arms to decide a disputed question of constitutional construction, and set the fate of slavery on the ordeal of battle, you took, as it seems to me, the first irrevocably false step. You refused to abide by the decision of the tribunal provided by the Constitution, and you would not accept the verdict of the people, rendered under the constitutional forms, when adverse to you. The barriers which had been provided for just such an emergency, you, in heat and impatience, threw down. No written constitution can possibly be made strong enough in itself to restrain the people, unless they themselves are wise and calm enough to see, even in their hottest moments, even when the temptation to grasp a coveted object or secure a threatened end, is most overwhelming, that in the long run and upon a balance of contingences, they will be happier by observing scrupulously their self-imposed limits. They may have to lose or defer a cherished hope, that they may not by-and-by be obliged to suffer a dreaded ill. But the passions which the slavery agitation aroused, were too fierce for argument, too impatient for the tedious processes of law.

The second step was taken by us when we broke from President Lincoln's calm, peaceful, and constitutional way, and dashed our mad course in our turn through the organic law.

Mr. Lincoln's mind was legal and moderate, and he moved carefully in a well-considered path. Mr. Sumner's mind is theoretical and extreme, and very impatient of restraint. He must leap to his end, even if the heavens fall; and upon him eventually fell the mantle of leader of the Republican party. To his inspiration, more than any other man, is due the reconstruction acts. The same madness ruled the hour which had already wrought your ruin. Your leaders could not brook their threatened fate in the Union; ours, could not postpone for a moment their promised fortune. It seems to me, if we trace out the process, it is the same in the one case as in the other. It was in both cases what I have called political intemperance. Neither party had faith enough in their cause or fellow-citizens, or patience enough in natural or regular methods, or confidence enough in the supreme law which our fathers gave us to bide their time, in the assured conviction that the greatest good for all must eventually result. You have suffered the penalty of your intemperance, and you are feeling its effects bitterly to-day. We, too, if I am not very much mistaken, have a day of reckoning in store for us, a painful sobering from our debauch. If we persist, it is impossible for any tolerable government to continue long, for it will degenerate into a mere squabble of contending factions, for a chance to oppress, for a time, their less active or less numerous opponents.

Now you can see clearly enough to-day where your interest lies. If you invoke the Constitution it is not hard to find the reason. You need most terribly just that protecting medium interposed between you and the governing majority. A constitution is meant for just that, to mitigate and distribute the blows of majorities. Some day, I have no doubt, we shall see in Massachusetts the merit of its operation as clearly as you do now, but I fear that it will not be until we are in a minority and look in vain for the shield we threw away to ward some threatened blow. But to you, my friends, this necessity is pressing, is overbearing. Something you must have, you think,



or perish. Now without going so far as that, I believe that the very best thing for you to do is to try to get back within the Constitution of the United States. You are yet substantially prisoners of war, held by military force, and liable at any time to further orders from the majority. I do not intend to speak disrespectfully of your State Government, and I would especially urge the utmost obedience to your *de facto* rulers; but I take it that it would not be long insisted upon here if it was understood that the North took no manner of interest in it. You want the original principles of the Union restored; the right of the States to manage their own domestic affairs without the interference of the General Government, and the manifold checks and balances and distribution of powers which our ancestors devised, readjusted; and I agree with you that it is your only practicable escape from the jail which Radicalism, North and South, has made of your good old State, so far as you are concerned.

And this brings us to the key of our discussion. How can this be done? Why, how did it happen to need be done—I mean the last and proximate cause of your present unprotected position? It was, as I think, mainly because the extreme, impatient, and fanatical portion of the governing party were enabled, partly in consequence of Mr. Lincoln's death, and partly by the indiscretion of the South, to overpower the calmer and more moderate men in the party and wield its whole force against you. Now I know that it is likely that many of you may feel a general and indiscriminate detestation of the Republican party, involving the whole array in the denunciations which you would like to launch at their accredited leaders. Now, gentlemen, this feeling is not unnatural, and it is one of the worst results of the bad government you suffer that it makes men feel so; it fosters a blind, indiscriminating enmity to its rulers among its subjects; but in your case it is very unwise to indulge it, and it is very unjust to a large section of that party. There are hosts of wise, calm, kind, and moderate men in that

party. There are multitudes who feel no more unkindness to you than I do ; there are many thousands who deplore and deprecate the course which has been taken in dealing with you — a majority of that party, as I hope and pray, love the Constitution as well as I do, and regret its infraction as deeply as I do ; but yet they can see no alternative but to go with it to-day. The fact is, that distrust, suspicion, fear, has more to do with your sorry plight than anger or malice. I have not always thought so ; but I have thought so of late. There was certainly a feeling of soreness, a rising of the gorge, at the thought of the reappearance of your old leaders in conspicuous places, but the strongest cards which the Radical leaders held were disbelief in your vows of allegiance, want of confidence in your professions respecting slavery, fear for the future of the freedmen, and a deep distrust of your patience and good conduct in such matters as free discussion, forbearance with difference of opinion, and the right of unmolested travel or settlement among you. Perhaps you are aware how gravely such doubts and fears have compromised your case, but it may be wholesome if distasteful to review these wide-spread suspicions and opinions a little in detail. Of course, nothing could tend more strongly to justify the severe measures of the Republican party towards you, or secure to them more surely an indefinite extension of political power, than to be able to persuade the North, which in the early days of peace was inclined to place a generous confidence in your professions of a sincere and absolute acquiescence in the event of the war, and your purpose to abide in good faith by the decision, that you were dissemblers and dishonorable perjurers, that your purpose was to redeem by hard swearing what you lost by hard fighting, and you yourselves in many cases furnished the material for making evidence against yourselves. Part of it was legitimate and part was very unfair, but it was all eagerly caught up and unsparingly used. If you had been a dangerous foreign foe, whose utter destruction was necessary for our safety, greater pains could hardly have been

taken to inflame the people against you, and close their hearts to your appeals. I doubt if Cato took more trouble to show the Roman people that Carthage must be destroyed, and Punic faith must have been very bad indeed, if it was represented to be worse than your own. Every hasty word, every natural regret, every expression of pride in the memories of the old campaigning days, every ebullition of heat, was carefully remembered and spread before the North. If an irresponsible newspaper editor or reporter published a foolish and inflammatory article, it was instantly pounced upon and scattered all over the North, to show that the mass of Southern feeling was as rebellious as ever. If you made any attempt to take part in politics, you were bent on revolution; if you refrained, you were sullenly plotting a new insurrection. The peaceful presence of delegates at the Convention in New York was a plot, and the resolutions were dictated by you, and your only object was to seduce the Democratic party into a new war. These devices, and a thousand more, have been used so long and so well that it is no wonder that they produced a very great effect.

The person or the paper cited against you may have been so obscure as not to have reached your notice here, or so low as to preclude serious attention on your part, or the writer or the speaker may have been garbled or falsified; but it made no difference. The contradiction or disproof came after the damage was done, and was not published to the same audience which had seen or heard the charge made. The antidote was powerless to reach the poison. Nor were your intentions respecting slavery satisfactory. It was urged that it had become so ingrained, that you could not of yourselves refrain from hankering for it, and the wish would ripen into deeds if the chance were offered. It was useless to urge your consent to the thirteenth amendment, for if you ever had the power, you would surely denounce your action therein as done under duress and void. If one asked to be shown some conceivable method by

which, under the circumstances, such a consummation could be practically arrived at, the only answer was, "Where there is a will, there is a way." It was useless to urge that if slavery was at best, an expensive establishment, it now would be worse than valueless. Nor could the very men, who had always proved this very fact, and declared further that you were sitting on a powder magazine, even when your slaves were most isolated, most ignorant, most guarded, and absolutely unarmed, see that now when they had tasted freedom, been stuffed with new ideas of their rights, unwatched and bristling with weapons, any attempt to re-enslave them would be the act of a madman, who plunges a flaming torch into the black grains of powder beneath him. The distrust upon this head was mostly fostered by intrepid statement, and supported by vague but passionate declamation.

But on another cognate subject, your own people furnished weapons, which were used with disastrous effect against you. I think that universal suffrage was probably forced on you when it was, and as it was, by the vagrant laws, which several of your Southern Legislatures passed soon after the war closed. These were instantly paraded to prove that you were determined to restore slavery in the person of her sister, enforced servitude for poverty, or, if not, yet it was urged that you were unfit to be left in charge of the freedmen. Now there are doubtless grave difficulties in the problem which this vast, ignorant, and from want of education and training, frequently thriftless and vagrant population, presented to you for solution. The embarrassments are also more apparent to you on the spot than to those unfamiliar with the surrounding and preceding circumstances. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that the laws were needful, humane and wise, they were exceedingly inopportune and unfortunate for you. The North was naturally exceedingly sensitive on this point. The slaves had been manumitted by us for our own ends, and if we left them exposed to your anger, or caprice, or vengeance, it would indeed be an in-

delible stain upon our escutcheon. We had become guardians of the freedmen, and we must be faithful to our trust. The most calm and moderate men were as clear as the loudest and most noisy, that it was an undoubted obligation on our part to secure by all means in our power, their security and happiness. It had long been urged that it was impossible to insure safety for the blacks among you, except by arming them with the franchise, and your vagrant laws added the practical proof which was alone needed to clench the theoretical deduction.

Again, it was vehemently asseverated and shown by innumerable letters from all kinds of people, that, in their opinion, it would be impossible for a man holding strong Northern opinions about slavery and the war, to come down here and speak freely or travel without molestation and annoyance, or to settle here with safety. It was said that free speech was dangerous, open discussion prohibited, or allowed only under protest, and persecution for political opinion universal. It is very generally believed by us that if you had your own way you would endure no contradiction and tolerate no dissent, and it is published every day that even now the negro voter is freely coerced by you to vote against his conscience. My purpose is not to discuss the justice of these charges or their validity, but to state them to you clearly, to show the process which has aided in fixing your present condition, whether they are true or false. The fact that they were used as the most potent engines to build up and sustain a public opinion which could sanction and support the reconstruction acts, discovers at once that a general belief in their truth was at all events considered by the Radical leaders essential to their purpose of showing a determination on your part never to yield us peaceable possession of what we had won by the war. And this misgiving and suspicion it is, so engendered and nourished, which you must overcome before you can have peace.

For the North is determined, as I believe, to retain and establish, as the legitimate results of the war, these general positions, with all the logical consequences necessary for their con-

venient enjoyment : first, the utter renunciation of the doctrine of secession ; second, the entire extirpation of slavery and all its family ; third, a fair and unhampered career for the freedmen ; fourth, the equal right of every citizen of the United States to travel, speak, and live in any State, so long as he does not infringe the rights of others. I do not believe that any considerable portion of the people would be willing to sacrifice any part of these acquisitions. The most effective battery against the Democratic party to-day is, that they are willing to abandon to you some or all of these trophies. If it were conceded on all hands that you were faithfully and unalterably determined never again to struggle by force or fraud for their restoration, and the bare question was whether the Constitution should be restored or reconstruction maintained, I think the result would never be in doubt. The great desideratum, therefore, for your restoration to constitutional privileges seems to me to be first to deserve, and then to obtain, the confidence of our Northern communities in your acquiescence in good faith in these results of the war. But you will doubtless say, “ We have deserved it ; we have done our best to obtain it ; but we have failed, and we are growing careless and desperate of ever securing it, do what we will.” My friends, you must remember that confidence is at best a plant of very slow growth, and when surrounded by an atmosphere so hostile as ours the only wonder is that it is not utterly killed. You must not forget that we are in the midst of the most exciting election ever held, and it is the passion of a few, the interest of many, and the business of a multitude to defeat the Democratic party. You must bear in mind that you yourselves by your exertions in favor of that party which seems to you not unnaturally just now your only means of escape from misery, encourage misunderstanding and inflame suspicion.

In view of all these facts I do not think you can look for a candid and tolerably dispassionate review of your unhappy case until after the Presidential election at least, and probably not until some time has elapsed after it, to allow the fermentation

inseparable from it to subside. The gravest misfortune which I apprehend from delay arises from the tendency of misgovernment to harden discontent into disaffection, and exasperate the sense of injury into a sentiment of settled resentment. This deplorable result is likely to happen — nay, it is almost sure to follow, if you do not summon your utmost patience and fortitude. I pray you, my friends, to struggle with all your might against the inroads of discouragement and the temptations of despair. If you can muster the endurance to wait calmly, and labor honestly and heartily for your redemption, your reward, if late, will be rich and abundant. I cannot believe that a people which has shown such power of intense and prolonged exertion as yours did in the war, will prove lacking in the high quality of patient self-command, and especially when your whole future depends upon it. What else can you do? The idea of a second appeal to arms is madness. It is the dream of the suicide which could alone induce you to “take arms against a sea of troubles, and, by opposing, end them.” If any of you, in the inmost recesses of his heart, has ever harbored such a thought, banish it at once and forever. Better, ten thousand times better, for yourselves, your wives, your daughters, and for your country to “bear the ills you have, than fly to others that you know not of.” As your committee truly and wisely say in their letter of invitation of me, “The policy of the South is peace, it is her only hope; you will see this with your eyes and hear it with your ears;” — and I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears, and I am persuaded that all this people know that they are right and feel as they do upon this point.

I fear also that the admission of all the negroes in these States to suffrage, and the exclusion of substantially all the leading men of the South from a share in shaping your constitutions and laws, coming when it did and as it did, will seriously aggravate the difficulties which beset your way back to a cheerful and peaceful re-establishment of mutually satisfactory

relations. Taken by itself I think you might render universal suffrage tolerable with universal amnesty. I imagine that many of its more alarming features would disappear, or be very much ameliorated. The tendency of this portion of the reconstruction policy to encourage a class of political demagogues to stir up strife and ill-feeling between whites and blacks here upon which to found their own political fortune, is undoubtedly one of the gravest defects of the system in its practical working. It embitters relations which might be cordial and must be friendly if you are to dwell together in peace and prosperity. And here again I must urge you to be patient, and difficult though it be, to call a little philosophy to your aid. Such a convulsion as you have experienced must needs leave a multitude of lesser ruptures in its train, which require time more than anything else to readjust. With a return to constitutional government, I think that even universal suffrage, supposing it was found necessary to let it stand as it is, as a choice of evils, (for I certainly regard it as an evil here,) might be made compatible with good order, good government, and good feeling. Considering the relations which formerly existed between the two races, and the great advantage which the wealthy, educated and intelligent landowner is always found to possess in agricultural communities, I think you can hardly deprecate or dread competition with adventurous strangers upon a fair field of rivalry.

Your legitimate and proper influence, fairly exerted, must prove in the long run more persuasive than that of strangers or others who are lacking in these advantages. At least, this has been the general experience in other countries. But in order to secure a secure a fair opportunity even to try the experiment, it is essential that the dangerous element of hostility of race should be kept out of the calculation. If that poison once fastens firmly on your vitals your political future is desperate, or curable only by an antidote which I cannot contemplate with calmness.

Next, then, to peace, I think, you are bound to cultivate



friendly relations with the negroes among you. Your true interests are identical, and their identity must, in time, become as apparent as it is demonstrable. You should spare no efforts and no practical measures in your power to show this clearly, both by word and deed, to the freedmen. You have no right to forego this exertion; an honest and manful attempt now may save you incalculable mischief by-and-by. I do not see, nor have I been able to discover during my stay among you, that you do as yet cherish any ill-will to the negro. I have found but one sentiment of kindness expressed towards him; and why should it be otherwise? He was faithful to you in your years of struggle. He never, when he might, rose upon your defenceless homes. When you were at the front he did not free himself. If he is ignorant it is by no fault of his, and it should be your care, as it certainly is your interest, to instruct him. If from ignorance and inexperience he is liable to be abused and misled, it is your place to protect and direct him. If he is poor and distressed, it is your duty to help him if you are able; and all this you know and feel as well as I do.

And on the other hand I would say to the colored men here at the South, that I entertain the kindest feelings to them, and feel a very deep solicitude for their permanent welfare and happiness. In all sincerity I would tell them that I fear that their present importance in politics is likely to be used for purposes which are dangerous to their ultimate well-being. As they are situated, a condition of permanent alienation and hostility between them and the whites can only issue in disastrous results to their eventual prosperity and progress. To both whites and blacks I would counsel the most forbearing and patient consideration for each other. Your cases are difficult enough at best. For God's sake do not make them hopeless by needless misunderstanding, or anger or ill blood. I think that even if you were free to do as you liked, that a wise policy would dictate the education and gradual enfranchisement of the negroes as fast as they were fit for it. No free people can afford to

perpetuate ignorance among its people, for ignorance is its internecine enemy. Nor do I think that any statesmanlike policy in a republic can suffer any permanent exclusion of any class of its citizens from a share in the government of the commonwealth.

I know we have had movements at the North, looking to some such policy in regard to foreigners, as many sincere men are now urging upon you in reference to the colored people. The cry of "America for Americans," has been as loud and more popular than the shout that "this is a white man's government." I can adopt neither, and I beg you not to be tempted by your present evils, to make the latter your political shibboleth. Be far-seeing and generous enough to take a loftier stand and see this broad land to be the refuge of the oppressed of all nations, and of all colors, where their civil rights are respected and an interest in the common Government is conceded as soon as a due regard to the safety and good order of all will permit. Nothing can be a more fruitful source of discontent and disturbance than the existence among you of a caste hopelessly excluded from political privileges.

My friends, I am trespassing upon your kindness; but upon a subject so broad as the one we are considering to-day, it is impossible to be concise. Your relations to the political parties of the North, have a very important bearing upon your fate, at all events just now, and demand careful meditation. Most of you doubtless regard the success of the Democratic party as essential to your release from your present situation; but it is my duty to remind you that men in your position have no right to be bigoted partisans. You must, of course, feel a deep interest in the success of those who espouse your cause, and you may properly exert all legitimate influence to promote their interests; but you ought not to shut the door to aid from any source. I have already deprecated unreasonable and undistinguishing hostility to the Republican party; I would now warn you against an absolute and exclusive devotion to any party. If the De-

mocracy succeed in electing their candidates, you will be subjected to temptations as trying as the demand upon your sufferance may prove, in case General Grant is chosen. Hasty, ill-considered, passionate, violent action in the event of Democratic success, would be almost sure in the end, to turn to your discomfiture, and render your last estate worse than the first; and yet it will require a good deal of self-command to control the reaction from this depression. But the country even in that event, will be so evenly divided and so greatly excited, that a small thing may induce a terrible catastrophe. On the other hand, in case of General Grant's election, you will be called on to exercise a while longer your patience and forbearance. I am sure it will be rewarded in the end. I do not believe that General Grant is your enemy. I feel sure he means kindly to you, and will try to do justice and show mercy in his course to you. A large mass of Republicans will help you if you will do your best to help yourselves. A great majority of all the North, only wait to be sure it is safe to take you cordially by the hand once more. Bide, then, your time in either event. Possess your souls in patience. Call to your aid that grandest of human qualities, self-control, and all will yet be well. This nation has had too much of violence and headlong haste. You, in particular, have had a terrible warning against heat and passion. Keep cool, and watch your chance, come whence it will. Above all things, do nothing to render it more difficult than it now is for either party to return to the constitutional system. If you favor haste and passion in the Democratic party, or by impatience strengthen the hands of the extreme men in the Republican party, you equally retard the coming of your only sure salvation—a re-establishment upon safe and lasting foundations of the temple of constitutional liberty which our fathers reared. Keep your eyes fixed steadily upon this as a pole star to steer your political course by. Stop your ears to the blandishments of this temptation of immediate relief on the one hand, or that seduction of gratified passion on the other.

Summon all your self-restraining manhood, and you shall sail safe between the Scylla and Charybdis which perplex your way.

My friends, I have almost done, and I will detain you but a moment longer to suggest some thoughts which, as a citizen of Massachusetts and a native of New England, have long occupied my mind and seem to me appropriate to this meeting on the soil of South Carolina. Separated as our States have been for many years in sentiment, their substantial interests are very similar. Their material wants and products are correlative. Their political interests are likely to be identical, and their popular characteristics are counterparts. I do not mean by counterparts that they are alike, but that one is the supplement of the other. The one cold, cautious, and thoughtful; the other warm, impulsive, and impressionable. Combine these qualities and you double their power by regulating and economizing their force. Nor need we look far to foresee their political affiliation in the future if all goes well. The policy of the seaboard States in reference to the great questions of financial, industrial, and commercial interest which must inevitably replace the incidents left by the war as soon as they are disposed of, can hardly fail to be nearly related. The next great political division promises to be one of water-sheds rather than of sections. The great interior basin can and will, if it likes, dictate to the outer slopes of the mountains, and they will need a good understanding among themselves and a pretty cordial co-operation of measures, and a good strong constitution, too, to retain and uphold their present place in the general policy. Look, too, for a moment, at their industry and products. We of New England are naturally, and I hope we shall always be, a ship-building, sea-going, commercial people, carrying, and fishing, and toiling everywhere upon the face of the waters. You produce the cotton, and rice, and timber, and turpentine, which we carry and consume. We are deeply interested in manufactures which you desire, while we work up your raw material with our busy spindles. I cannot

dwelt upon details, but if I am at all right in my idea, we can be mutually useful to each other. Whether this be so or not, there has long been enmity between us. Let it be so no longer. We have cherished our dislike, magnified our causes of complaint, and brooded over our wrongs. Let us forgive and forget. With slavery its cause, let all ill feeling cease. Let us be friends and brothers once more, as our forefathers in the grand old days of the revolution were before us. In the name of that common heroic ancestry, by the memories of every battle-field of the War of Independence, let our dissensions cease. Let good will and brotherly love cast out old bitterness, and let us all hasten the day when Massachusetts and South Carolina may stand once more, hand warmly grasped in hand, under the old ancestral roof-tree, and beneath the old flag.

My fellow-citizens of South Carolina, I thank you for the attentive audience you have given to me, although I fear I have been tedious, and perhaps some of my views are distasteful to you. I have carefully avoided any attempt to stir your feelings or amuse your minds. It does not seem to me an occasion for eloquence if I had it, or humor if I felt it. I am deeply and seriously impressed with the difficulties under which you labor, and the dangers which threaten our system of government, and I have spoken seriously because I felt serious. Whatever may come of it, I shall feel amply rewarded if by any chance I may have turned one heart to a calm, patient, earnest, honest effort to forward, so far as in it lies, the restoration of the Constitution and the Union.

At the conclusion of the address of Mr. Adams, Mr. Wade Hampton being loudly called for, arose and addressed the meeting in these words : —

GENTLEMEN : Knowing your desire to hear from the other side of the Union, your Committee have made every effort to induce Northern statesmen to come to this section, and we have at last succeeded in bringing one before you who bears the great

historical name of him whom Jefferson called the defender of the Declaration of Independence. He came to talk to you firmly, calmly, and considerately, and he has done so. I only in turn desire to say a word or two for South Carolina, or at least for a large portion of South Carolina. I wish the gentleman to carry back with him to his people the assurance that upon the issues of the war the people of the South are a unit. They are now, and always have been, in the same perfect good faith with which they surrendered, and they now, and have *always* recognized the questions of slavery and secession as settled forever. So far as I am concerned, I assert and claim to have been of the first to accept the results of the war, and I did so fully and cordially. I recognized the freedom of our former slaves, and was the first man in the State to address the colored people and tell them they were free. I want you, sir, moreover, to tell your people that the people of this State, in a Convention held a short time ago, in which twenty-one districts were represented, declared their willingness to give to the negro the same suffrage that he was given in Massachusetts. That same Convention declared, too, that the people are not willing to grant universal suffrage, but that they recognize slavery as dead forever, and they do not desire, nor are they willing to permit it to be reëstablished in any of its phases or forms.

A word in relation to myself. I have been the victim of great, wilful, and malicious misrepresentation. The Radical papers and leaders have accused me of disloyalty, and to substantiate their charges, they have taken up and garbled my alleged statement that the clause " Reconstruction acts are revolutionary, null, and void " in the Democratic platform, was my plank, — that I dictated it. To this point I refer, because our distinguished and esteemed guest has referred to it in his very able address. Now I here deny that I made any such statement. I did *not* dictate it. I *did* say that it was my plank in the platform, and it is the plank of every Southern gentleman. I was on the Committee to frame the platform, and the South-

ern delegates on that committee felt themselves as guests only, and resolved to express no preference in the nomination going on, and to take no steps in the interpolation of any plank in the platform. We were willing to leave the entire matter in the hands of the great Democracy of the North, feeling assured that they would do us at least full justice. The only resolution I offered in that Committee was one pledging the support of the South to the Judiciary of the United States, and proposing to leave the matter of the status of the Southern States in their hands for final adjustment and settlement. In the progress of the debate which arose upon this, a Northern delegate expressed the hope that we would not press the point, upon which every Southern delegate withdrew whatever resolution he might have offered. A gentleman from Michigan uttered the assurance that in the event of the success of the Democracy, the South would find relief from her troubles; that the "Reconstruction acts of Congress would be declared revolutionary, null, and void." I then said "if those three words were inserted in the platform, it would be all we could ask—we would be satisfied." These words were inserted by a distinguished son of that glorious little State, Connecticut, and were unanimously adopted. That was the extent of my revolutionary action in New York. I am glad the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts has come among us to see for himself and learn our condition and wants. I want him to go back and tell his people that we may be mistaken, but we are honest, sincere, and truthful. He will do that, I am sure, and in doing that he will have done much towards accomplishing his mission of peace, of good feeling and harmony, a mission in which I am rejoiced to be also engaged.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 001 930 589 2